



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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Franklin and La Crosse educators receive Presidential Teaching Awards

Awards are highest honor for teachers of mathematics and science

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster today saluted two educators for their dedication to their profession. Sharon Hushek of Franklin and Kathleen Snyder of La Crosse earned Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, the nation's highest honor for mathematics and science teachers.

"Educators who receive this award strive for excellence in their teaching practice," Burmaster said. "They are devoted to their students' education, they collaborate with their colleagues, and they reach out to the community to share their love of teaching and learning."

Awardees receive a \$10,000 gift from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the independent federal agency that administers the awards program, and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for this week's celebratory events and professional development activities. Educators will be in Washington until Saturday, April 16.

Hushek teaches sixth-graders at Ben Franklin Elementary School in Franklin. She reports that she teaches science every day, with an extra period on Fridays "just for fun." Hushek's unit on electrical energy helped students develop a personal understanding through movement, mental visualization, and investigation. Students used a light bulb, battery, and two wires to answer the question, "How does the light bulb light?" Through group and class discussions, journaling, and expanded opportunities to discover how electrical current flows, students designed personal products that included a house schematic diagram and an electroscope.

Snyder, a fifth-grade teacher from Southern Bluffs Elementary School in La Crosse, says her responsibility is "to empower my students to become thinkers who are willing to take responsibility for their own learning." She uses peer tutoring because of its benefits to the whole class. Those who are less

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secure have a chance to learn from a peer, and those who are more secure have an opportunity to teach what they know and become more comfortable with the strategies. One lesson had students using communication, reasoning and proofs, number operations, and algebra in their study of division through a real-life activity. Students created a problem for 160 divided by 14, reasoning that 160 apples divided by 14 bags will leave a remainder of six apples, well used as samples to encourage customers to buy more apples.

Hushek and Snyder were among six candidates for Presidential Teaching Awards from Wisconsin nominated last summer by Burmaster. The others are Nancy Jo Grochowski, Lincoln Center of the Arts, Milwaukee, and Jane Maki, Osceola Elementary School, for mathematics, and Martha Kronholm, Grove Elementary School in Wisconsin Rapids, and Lynn Raley, Platteville Middle School, for science.

Established by Congress in 1983, the annual Presidential Awards program identifies outstanding mathematics and science teachers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories, and the U.S. Department of Defense Schools. This year's recipients—chosen by a panel of leading mathematicians, scientists, and educators in conjunction with the White House—are kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers.

Nominations for 2005 awards, which will recognize middle school and high school teachers (grades seven through 12), are due May 2 and may be made by anyone who knows an excellent mathematics or science teacher. Nomination forms and additional program information can be found on the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching website at < <http://www.paemst.org/> >.

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